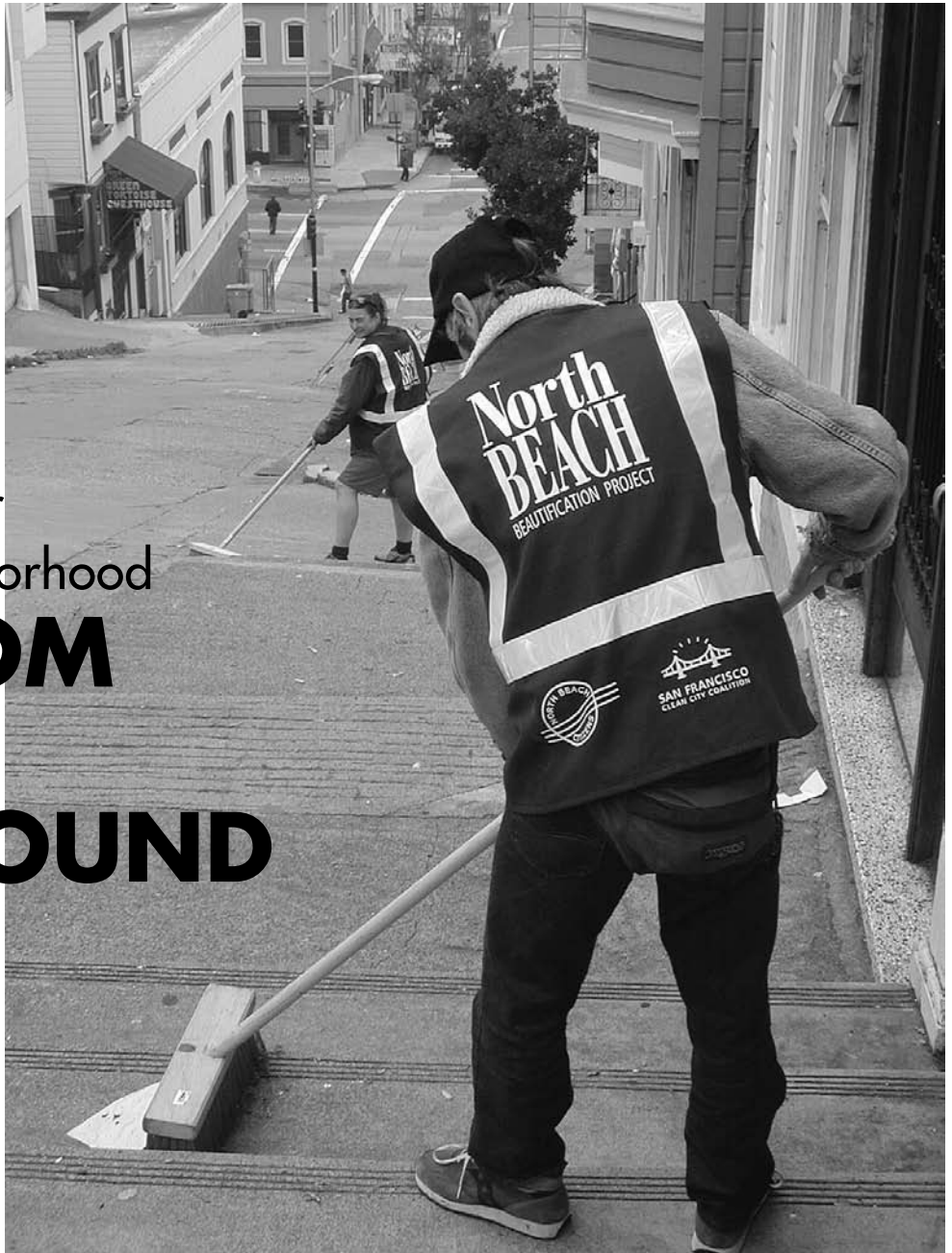


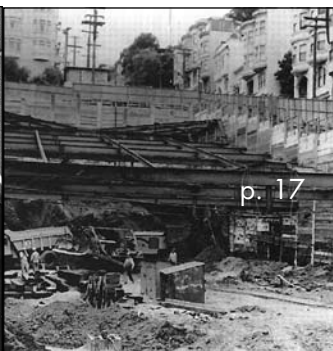
The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

A Better
Neighborhood
**FROM
THE
GROUND
UP**

ISSUE 181
FALL 2007





THE SEMAPHORE # 181 FALL 2007

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Vedica Puri

“**W**hat truly makes North Beach unique are the people who live there. If they are left behind by the market, so, too, is the character that a century of effort has kept in place.” So goes the article naming North Beach one of the 2007 top 10 neighborhoods in America. Pretty amazing accomplishment if you think you about it. For those of you who haven’t seen it yet, it looks like the THD may have written this piece—but we didn’t. Because I could not say it better myself, here are parts of the article by the American Planning Association regarding North Beach. Just another reminder of how lucky we are to live here.

“This thriving, European-style neighborhood

—nestled in a sunny, wind-protected valley between San Francisco’s financial district, Chinatown, Russian Hill and Telegraph Hill—has evolved into one of the city’s most unique and authentic communities. North Beach, with the help of planning and zoning tools, has managed to preserve its essential character: a mix of tolerance and tradition in both its built and social environment.

“...North Beach attained International repute in the 1950s as the genesis of the Beat Generation. While it remains a popular pilgrimage destination for former beatniks, the neighborhood is anything but a relic. Its eclectic mix of mom-and-pop shops,

continued on p. 4



THD BOARD MOTIONS

FOR THE MONTHS OF JULY-AUGUST 2007

July, 2007

MOTION: To approve the budget as presented except with an additional \$2,000 added to the Social Committee budget, bringing the total Social Committee budget to \$5,000 for this year.

All Board members voted in favor of the Motion.
The Motion passed unanimously.

August, 2007

No Motions



THE PLANNING AND ZONING REPORT

WILL RETURN IN
OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Sean O'Donnell

“Anything can be fixed
except a fallen soufflé.”

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

nightclubs, and polyglot character make it a favorite among residents and tourists alike.

"North Beach is, in many ways, a traditional neighborhood: It's rarely more than a few blocks walk to find a grocer, bakery, barber shop, hardware store, church, school or park. What cannot be found in the neighborhood are chain stores and fast-food outlets. And that's by design.

"As early as the 1980s, the city placed controls on the type and scale of commercial uses as a way to help protect North Beach's identity. The idea was to promote homegrown businesses and discourage chains and franchises by including in local regulations descriptions of how North Beach businesses could operate. To further dissuade chain stores, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted in 2005 to ban retailers with more than 11 stores from locating in the neighborhood.

"North Beach's Identity has been formed over a century or more; Settled in the 1850s, the area's first residents were middle-class Americans. Thirty years later, two-thirds were immigrants, mostly from Ireland, Germany, and France. By 1939, more than 60,000 Italians had moved to this square-mile neighborhood, earning it the nickname of Little Italy. The streets were lined with Italian restaurants, shops, and social clubs. Tourists frequented the area, drawn by

the quality and affordability of the local cuisine.

"With the 1950s came an influx of beatniks who filled jazz clubs, coffee houses, and esoteric bookstores. Nightclubs along Broadway hosted top entertainers. Today you can find boutique shops and restaurants mixed in with dance clubs and risqué venues, making North Beach a neighborhood of contrasts and one of the liveliest parts of town.

"Part of North Beach's appeal stems from restrictions on building heights and billboards that were prompted by neighborhood associations and implemented in the 1980s. Today, historic landmarks such as Colt Tower are visible; no skyscrapers block the view. Washington Square, the neighborhood's central open space, is a place for morning Tai Chi classes, dog walking, sky gazing, and several annual festivals."

On behalf of the THD Board, and with your help, we look forward to continuing the wonderful traditions that have earned our urban paradise such a prestigious award.



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PICKING THROUGH TELEGRAPH HILL GARBAGE

By Paul Kohler, THD Director

Trash Talk at The Shrine

The Scene: March 21st at 7pm in the basement of the St Francis Shrine on the corner of Vallejo and Columbus, a public meeting with the Department of Public Works (DPW) co-hosted by THD and the North Beach Merchants Association. An audience of forty people wanted answers and some were already vocalizing their grievances before the meeting had begun. A line of DPW dour-faced representatives were seated at the front tables, lined up for an old fashioned North Beach tar and feathering. Then the senior DPW representative, DPW Deputy Director of Operations Mohammed Nuru, stood up, a mountain of a man with an instant presence, dressed in an immaculate suit. He introduced everyone then launched into a long descriptive overview of the various DPW programs with special attention paid to the Community Corridors Partnership Program. Then Mohammed spoke of a recent spate of graffiti and of DPW's quick and successful response. He weaved into the audience increasingly modulating his volume as he brought us to heel. Every time he seemed to be done talking he started up again, expounding on another point. The audience's passion was deflating like a balloon; the DPW representatives at the front looked

comfortable and relaxed. This guy was good.

Finally, the dissertation passed and the audience got its chance. "What about the trash on Varennes Street where people often dump furniture?... Mason between Filbert and Greenwich is filthy and I've reported it to 28-CLEAN without result,... What about trash in Washington Square Park?...." Questions were handled with varying degrees of satisfaction. Towards the end of the meeting Steve Mahoney, the local DPW worker who frequents Caffe Trieste, stood up and volunteered that he'd address a list of the issues that had come up even though it wasn't his official job. The audience was mostly placated, feeling their issues had been heard and now were seemingly about to be addressed, albeit temporarily.

Then the bombshell. Someone pleaded for consistent cleaning of the Upper Grant Ave restaurant and bar area. Mohammed replied that 90% of the city is cleaned by mechanized street sweeping trucks, but the North Beach and Telegraph Hill areas don't get this cleaning because local residents had refused the service. Boom! A series of people vehemently argued against mechanized street cleaning: "they're noisy,... people have to move their cars,... they only clean the streets leaving the sidewalks unclean,... they push the dirt around instead of sucking it up," Mohammed

continued on next page



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Home Style Cookin'

Telegraph Hill Trash *continued from page 5*

stood his ground in the force of the gale. Jimmy Schein of Schein and Schein stepped in to summarize the points. Mohammed wrapped things up by saying that the officials had noted our issues, and we should use the new city and DPW number 3-1-1.

We all spilled out onto Vallejo St, our minds filled with thoughts of garbage. Some commented Supermen like Steve Mahoney can save the day on a case-by-case basis, but how do we clean the district consistently, in a uniform way ensuring our area is getting as good attention as other areas?

The Big Picture

Taking a step back and examining various reports on DPW and garbage reveals an interesting picture. In January of this year the Board of Supervisors released a Management Report of DPW authored by the city's Budget Analyst, Harvey Rose.

In the section on street cleaning the study summarized:

- Although the Department's goal is to resolve service requests within 48 hours, 18.6% weren't resolved within that time.
- 28-CLEAN service request calls weren't resolved within 48 hours 60.6% of the time.
- Proposition C, approved by voters in 2003, required DPW to set standards for street maintenance, publish maintenance schedules and regularly evaluate performance. Despite evidence that resource and schedule changes should be made due to information learned those changes weren't made.
- Litter citations aren't ade-

quately collected with 40.6% of fines remaining uncollected.

But how about our own District 3?

A report on 28-CLEAN DPW city-wide calls in 2005–2006 groups together District 3 calls. The District includes Telegraph Hill / North Beach as well as Chinatown, Gateway Commons, Financial District, Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Polk Gulch and Fisherman's Wharf. Dissecting those numbers we see the following results comparing District 3 (7,680 calls) to the entire city (71,038 calls):

- District 3 residents had a lower frequency of complaint calls (0.4 to 0.7%) and a higher frequency of compliments (0.2 to 0.1%) compared to city residents.
- Homeless related and shopping cart calls were lower in frequency in District 3 than in the city (2.2 to 4.3%).
- Litter receptacles and overflowed cans were of higher frequency in District 3 (9 to 6.1%).
- Packer trucks accounted for 1,457 calls in District 3, 19% of total calls for the District.

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Telegraph Hill Trash *continued from page 6*

- The top call category for District 3 was Street Cleaning, with 3,040 calls comprising 39.6% District 3 calls.

District 3 is a large and diverse area, of which Telegraph Hill is a fraction. So, to get a focused picture we need to look at some individual cases in our neighborhood.

Digging Into That Trash: Individual Stories

Scene 1: Al Baccari is 78 years old and as sharp as a tack. He was an altar boy at Joe DiMaggio's first wedding, has written books on Fisherman's Wharf and Telegraph Hill, and is essentially North Beach royalty. I asked Al what he thought of garbage in the area. "It's terrible. They need to clean it up," his voice continually rising. "My mother lives by the cable car tracks and for the amount of sand they throw down on the tracks it might as well be a beach! I need to get my deck chair out." I asked him about the garbage in the commercial areas, commenting that perhaps we don't want to be as antiseptic and squeaky clean as the Marina. I hadn't even gotten the words out of my mouth, when Al responded with the authority of Moses: "North Beach should be the best it can be, no less! Anyone who thinks any different is crazy."

Update: The cable cars need to put sand on the tracks for traction. Muni is responsible for cleaning up the sand but sometimes they're lax in getting it done. In this case, Steve Mahoney kindly hosed down the tracks for Al and contacted Muni. We haven't heard any complaints since.

Scene 2: Mechanized Street Cleaning was recently proposed for Chestnut Street between Columbus and Stockton, and Francisco Street between Columbus and Stockton. The request came from North Beach Place, the new 341 unit development off of Bay and DPW had made plans to carry it out. Eighty vehicles would need to be moved once a week. The local community, including THD Board Member Sarah Kliban, organized an effort to fight the proposed plan. Their

August 24, 2007 letter to DPW read, "The proposed parking restrictions... will create chaos and waste for neighborhood residents and for teachers at the local middle school, increase the night time safety risk for residents, and result in significantly more neighborhood noise and pollution, all without any substantial benefit regarding clean streets." After protestors wrote letters and turned up at public hearings, the DPW pulled the plan.

Scene 3. According to a 2002 city report San Francisco has at least twice the number of trash receptacles as New York, four times more than Los Angeles and five times more than Portland. Since January, the city's Department of Public Works has removed 305 city-owned garbage cans from San Francisco streets, or about 6 percent of the estimated 5,000 cans out there. Mayor Newsom says "We have too many garbage cans in the city." According to the Mayor many people are tossing out their personal trash in receptacles that are meant strictly for litter. Meanwhile, DPW has problems with the 500 lb. concrete trash cans sometimes being tipped over by the world's strongest drunks that we produce out of our bars. DPW has now started rolling out industrial strength trash cans that are bolted into the concrete. These cans have debuted on Market Street and reportedly will be making their way to North Beach at some point. One resident suggested another approach: "Why not do what the French do? They use light trash bags hanging on a metal stand every few feet along the street. These bags are too small for illegal dumping, and the streets remain clean. The bags are emptied every morning."

Scene 4: If Telegraph Hill / North Beach was a religious city then Washington Park would surely be our holiest site. Many community members are especially passionate about the Park and how it is cared for. The gardening and cleaning, including the trash is the responsibility of the Rec & Park gardener, not DPW. I asked Tom Whelan, who has a strong personal interest in the Park, what he thought

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NORTH BEACH CITIZENS: PROFILE OF THE NORTH BEACH PARTNERSHIP

By Brady McCartney

If you have ever walked the streets of North Beach on a weekday morning, chances are you have seen the North Beach Partnership (NBP) in action. Sporting signature forest green North Beach Partnership vests, the NBP participants have been beautifying North

Beach since 2004, focusing on the neighborhood's under-served and heavily trafficked areas.

The Partnership was formed by the North Beach Neighborhood Beautification Advisory Committee after residents, merchants, and other stakeholders
continued on page 11

Telegraph Hill Trash *continued from page 7*

about trash in the park. Tom's face immediately grew serious. "The festivals destroy the Park. It takes days or weeks to recover. We only have one gardener. Everyone uses that Park. It gets no rest." Now Tom's jaw was clenched and his eyes glazed with anger. "The dog owners bring their dogs and don't give a damn where they poop. People sit and lie on that same area completely unaware. It's disgusting! It happens every day in our Park!"

DPW Isn't a "Load of Rubbish"

Many of these stories have happy endings, at least for the time being. Repeatedly the word is that DPW did respond after that fateful meeting at the Shrine:

- Mason Street between Filbert and Greenwich is now consistently clean.
- 3-1-1 calls produce results.
- Sand on the cable car tracks is being cleaned off.
- Mechanized street cleaning programs have responded to the wishes of the local community.
- Varennes Street between Green and Union is now cleaned almost every day.

Steve Mahoney, Mohammed Nuru and others deserve credit. From talking to quite a few people the following seems to work well:

- a) The 3-1-1 number works very well. There is a lot better response time and follow through than the old 28-CLEAN. I personally reported a king-

sized bed that was dumped on Varennes St. and a real estate broker's sign on Greenwich and Child St., both of which were dealt with very quickly. 3-1-1 works... at least until the election!

- b) Off the record, I understand that if we want better street cleaning in a certain given area, then our best bet is manual "block cleaning" and having someone assigned to the area. To get this we'd need to gather community support, give information and a reasoned argument and address it to the Director of DPW, Fred Abadi.

By law, the property owner or the ground-floor tenant of the building immediately adjacent to the sidewalk is responsible for keeping it clean and free of litter. So if the sidewalk is a problem it might be a tough sell and you maybe best trying to clean it yourself.

DPW has a procedure for requesting mechanical street cleaning. They suggest you collect the names, addresses and signatures of as many residents and/or people who work on the street as possible before submitting the application. When deciding you should consider where most of the cleaning is needed, on the street or sidewalk.

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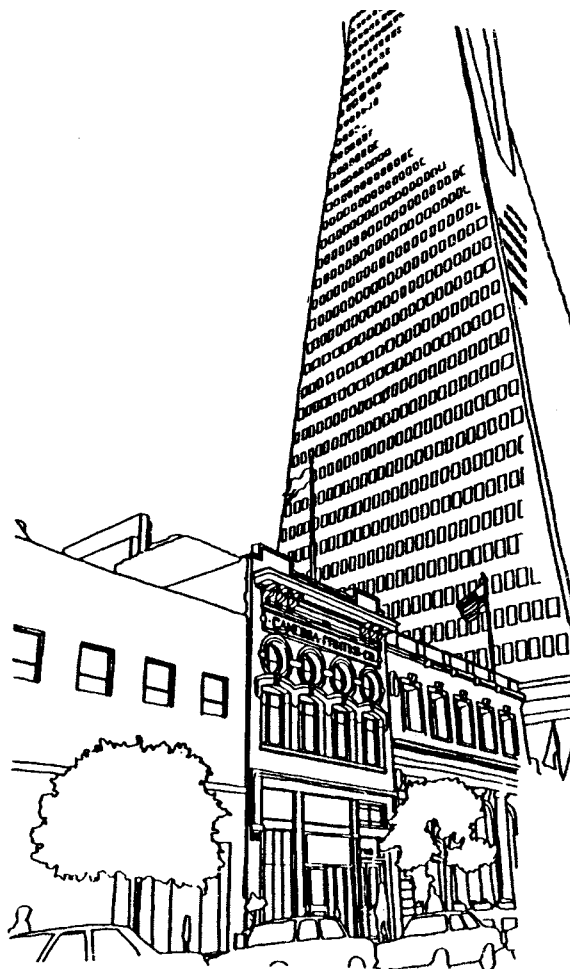
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REMEMBERING THE PLACE

By Mark Schwartz & Art Peterson

Walking on Upper Grant Avenue today it would be easy to overlook the seemingly abandoned storefront at No. 1546, just two doors shy of the Filbert Steps where Dan Maccharini's bronze seal for poets lies embossed at the corner, and next door to where Lawrence Ferlinghetti once had his print shop.

But between 1955 and 1959, this presently dilapidated building was at the center of San Francisco's Beat culture. That's because this was the location of The Place, a bohemian bar managed by two recent Black Mountain College alumni, Knute Stiles and Leo Krekorian. In a 1986 interview published in *North Beach Magazine*, Krekorian, who became known as the "Grandfather of the Beats," explained to writer

continued on page 29

North Beach Citizen *continued from page 8*

convened to discuss the lack of clean-up services in North Beach. What started as a discussion of additional ways to clean up the neighborhood quickly turned into a neighborhood clean-up service and a transitional employment program for the neighborhood's homeless with the involvement of North Beach Citizens (NBC).

Throughout its existence, the NBP has relied on NBC's storefront as its home base and NBC's homeless clients for its participants. All participants are responsible for maintaining their assigned routes and are trained to be spokespersons for the program.

Beyond the tangible benefits of the NBP lie a host of intangible benefits. The NBP promotes a sense of community within the participants by involving these men and women in a public community-improvement effort. It debunks the myth of able-bodied and able-minded homeless men and women not wanting to work and helps to instill a sense of pride in the individuals who participate.

Equally as important is the benefit to the North Beach merchants and the City of San Francisco. The Partnership provides the merchants with an additional, flexible clean-up service able to respond to weekend emergencies and the City with a low-cost clean-up service, reducing the cost of the City's maintenance in North Beach. Tom O'Connor, former Washington Square Park gardener and San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department employee, has

been a long time supporter of the NBP: "As someone who is out in the neighborhood everyday (and doing the same type of clean-up work), I can certainly see and appreciate the hard work and results that North Beach Partnership has achieved."

The North Beach Partnership addresses neighborhood cleanliness, environmental issues, and community well-being. It connects the homeless of North Beach to their neighbors and the merchants who directly benefit from their work. The NBP is an invaluable service to all involved and all who benefit.

Funding is limited for the North Beach Partnership; donations to North Beach Citizens specifically designated for the NBP will allow our community to continue to benefit from this program and will be greatly appreciated.

North Beach Citizens, 720 Columbus Ave, San Francisco, CA 94133, www.northbeachcitizens.org.

Upcoming Events:

North Beach Citizens' Fourth Annual Community Recognition Awards Dinner, Sunday, November 4, will begin at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails, dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m., and the program honoring Denise McCarthy will begin shortly thereafter. The ticket prices are \$150 for a McCarthy Supporter, \$250 for a McCarthy Patron, \$350 for a McCarthy Benefactor, and \$3,500 for a McCarthy Benefactor table of 10.





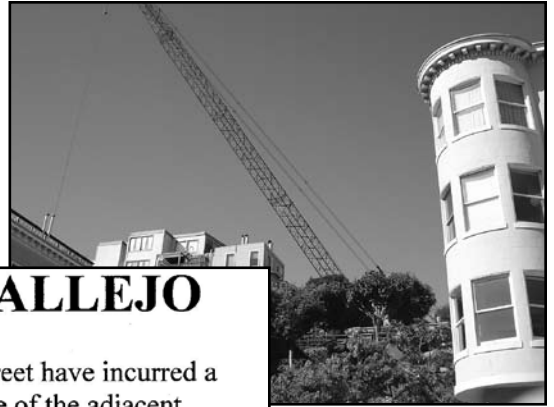
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VALLEJO STREET ON THE MEND



NEIGHBORS OF 455 VALLEJO

As you may be aware the neighbors at 455 Vallejo Street have incurred a rock slide which has impacted their building and some of the adjacent neighbor's buildings. This rockslide continues to present an imminent danger to the homes at the top and bottom of the hill. Emergency hillside stabilization repairs must be completed before the rains begin. Engineered Soil Repairs Inc has been selected as the contractor to perform repairs to the slope which are scheduled to start this work immediately.

In order to have access to perform the necessary emergency hillside stabilization repairs on the slope, a large crane will be set up on Vallejo Street between 455 Vallejo and the top of the hill at the cul de sac. We anticipate this repair work to take six to eight weeks. During this period, there will be limited access from Kearny to the top of Vallejo street. The north side of the street will remain open so that the garages can be accessed and emergency vehicles can go to the top of the hill if needed. No garages will be blocked, but there will be no street parking from approximately 448 Vallejo to the top of the hill on Vallejo Street from 7:00am – 5:00pm.

On Monday, October 1, 2007:

Vallejo Street from Columbus to the top of the hill will be closed to vehicular traffic from 7:00am to approximately 5:00pm. while the large crane and booms are brought up to the top of the hill and assembled. Traffic on Vallejo, Grant & Kearny will be re-routed. There will be very limited two-way access on Kearny and Vallejo for residents. But you may have to wait while the crane or equipment passes.

Tuesday, October 2, 2007:

Vallejo, Grant, and Kearny re-open with normal traffic flows. There will not be any parking restrictions from 455 Vallejo down the hillside.

This project is anticipated to take six to eight weeks to complete. Your cooperation will allow us to expedite the job, and hopefully the crane will be able to leave after four weeks if all goes well.

Photos by
Jerry Hurtado



MEET RHODA CURTIS AT THE NORTH BEACH LIBRARY ON DECEMBER 18

By Pat Cady

After the war ended in 1945 many young people came to San Francisco and found what they wanted in North Beach. Matches were made between free-spirited artists needing cheap studio space, and Italian landlords needing tenants for built-for-carriage-trade shops that stood empty.

With her then-husband Jim Pack, Rhoda rented a store at 1541 Grant Avenue for \$25.00 a month and started a business making handbags, belts and sandals. When the business took off they moved to 1461 Grant where \$100.00 rent included an upstairs flat, the site of many good parties.

In her book, a memoir titled, *Rhoda: Her First Ninety Years*, she remembers the North Beach painters, musicians, poets, writers, craftspeople and photographers who were on their way to international reputations, their friendships forged over spaghetti dinners and red wine. During one of those dinners in 1954 Rhoda floated the idea that Grant Avenue artists should display their work on

the street. The jeweler Peter Macchiarini liked the idea and they began to make plans for the first Grant Avenue Street Fair.

"We agreed," Rhoda writes, "that (photographer) Gene Wright and I would create the rules of the Fair and do all the planning. We decided that only artists who made their living by their art, or who had participated in a group exhibition, or had had a one-person show, would be invited. We didn't want entrepreneurs selling other people's work. We felt very strongly that artists should be able to reach their public directly." On a hot June day, San Francisco's first Street Fair debuted.

On December 18, Rhoda will appear at the North Beach Library at 7:00pm to talk about her years on Grant Avenue, one episode in a book recounting a long, intensively lived life that has spanned almost ninety years and is still filled to the brim with projects and friends. You can contact the author by e-mail: rhoda@rhoda-book.com.

Her book is available for sale at amazon.com and Cody's on Fourth Street in Berkeley. ♦



SAN FRANCISCO, GRANT AVENUE, 1945

Excerpted from *Rhoda Her First Ninety Years* by Rhoda Curtis, BookSurge, 2007

From the Ferry Building we made our way to Union and Stockton, where we found a small motel, and then we wandered down to Grant Avenue. Our search was for a place where Jim could set up a workshop, ideally somewhere with living space, as well. We planned that I would work downtown during the day, and Jim would make leather handbags and belts in the shop. Then I would help finish things in the evening.

As we walked up and down Grant Avenue, we noticed an empty store at 1541 Grant between Union

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PARKS & TREES REPORT



By Joe Butler

As reported in the last issue of *The Semaphore*, The City has purchased the Triangle! The small piece of land now inhabited by parked cars at the intersection of Lombard and Columbus, adjacent to DiMaggio Field, is now owned by the City and County of San Francisco. Thanks to the many members of the community, especially Board President Peskin, for its acquisition.

Grant Avenue was a bit greener this month as Telegraph Hill sprouted a park in honor of the Trust for Public Land's Park(ing) day in San Francisco. All over the City, automobile parking spots were transformed into makeshift parks. The event served to help people understand the choices we make with regard to public property. Most onlookers were delighted to find the park—out of context perhaps—but put to an

equally valid use of public space. A few more were amused and bemused, but surprisingly, no one objected to the loss of the parking spot for the day.

Robert Mattei, a new THD Board member is now spearheading the empty tree basin project. Thanks to those who surveyed the neighborhood, those others who have asked for trees and are patiently waiting, and still others who want a tree but have not yet contacted THD.

Contact Robert (roxyrobert@comcast.com) for information on how to get a tree for your sidewalk.

You may have noticed the new “street furniture” in the block surrounding Washington Square Park. Hopefully by the time this issue hits the street, the rag tag old newspaper boxes will have been cleared away and the new brown news racks, intended to distribute papers in a more aesthetic way, will be all that is left.

In an agreement with the City, publishers who had boxes in place before the DPW conducted a survey of the news racks are allowed a space in the new boxes. In exchange, no new boxes may be placed on the sidewalk, and the two on the Park side of the street, at Columbus and Powell, and Union at Stockton, will be the first to go if publishers do not keep the boxes stocked.

A six block area of North Beach, from Filbert to Vallejo, and Powell to Grant will over time all see the new news racks come in, and the odd assortment of old boxes will be removed. In negotiations with the city, it was agreed that block of news racks immediately adjacent to the park would be free of advertising while the other five blocks would have news racks sporting advertisements. The city has interpreted “adjacent” to mean that only the two news racks on the park side of the street would be free of ads. That's the way it stands now. Let the *Semaphore* know if you support a commercial free Park block!

(This is Joe Butler's last report, if you want to help the committee, contact THD)



An amused former City Poet Laureate, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and his partner in City Lights, Nancy Peters, check out the newest “spot” on PARK(ING) DAY on Grant.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES

RUSSIAN HILL NEIGHBORS WORK TO GREEN THE BROADWAY TUNNEL

by *Julienne M. Christensen*

Neighborhood activists agree that the greatest sense of accomplishment in successfully completing a community project comes with the excitement and sense of community that incubates new volunteer clusters and spurs ambitions for new projects.

By that measure, then, Helen Wills Park (on Broadway, just the other side of the Broadway Tunnel) has made its marks. The formerly crusty, rusted, cracked and contaminated playground has successfully layered dozens of users and uses in its small, reconfigured footprint. The park is frequently full, its experiments with space and play appreciated and enjoyed by many. As the surrounding trees grow in, the park is

settling in nicely as a warm, welcoming gate to Russian Hill. And now the neighbors who worked so long and hard on that project have expanded their volunteer list and are taking on another project with wonderful potential for their neighborhood.

Judy Junghans, past president of the Russian Hill Neighbors, has partnered with Steve Kendrick and an ever-expanding core group of volunteers to form the Greening the Broadway Tunnel Project. The group is focusing on the perimeters of the western end of the tunnel, stretching from West Broadway Minipark, past Helen Wills Park to Van Ness. It's a very dense neighborhood, with 55,000 people in the surrounding square mile, lots of families and seniors,

continued on page 18



Broadway Tunnel under construction, 1950.

ANNOUNCING: THE FIRST IN THE THD SALON SERIES

by Termeh Yeguaazarian

Ever wished you could meet the many artists who live in North Beach and have a discussion with them about their life, work and art in general?

The Art, Culture & History Committee is excited to announce our first THD 'Salon' on Oct. 24th at Five Points Studio, a new art space in North Beach, located in the former Bannam Theater space.

The Salon Series is an attempt to encourage an ongoing conversation about art, artists, our community and its culture. We hope to inspire an exchange

of thoughts, reflections and ideas that can potentially lead to a richer cultural experience in North Beach. The THD Salon is a modern approach to an old tradition, creating a nurturing environment for dialogue among friends and friends of friends! We aim to hold four salons per year, one for each season, and each one picking up the topic where we left off in the previous salon or, instead move on to the most pressing topic of the season, all revolving around the arts, culture and history of North Beach.

Each salon will feature a guest moderator and a

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Broadway Tunnel

continued from page 17

lots of walkers. It's got a tourist component, as the Hyde Street cable car rumbles across a bridge over the open top of the tunnel approach.

Few around remember that strip before houses were torn down and the tunnel digging and shoring began. Despite efforts to pretty up the concrete and offset the gash with a few vestigial parks, the tunnel is another reminder of the auto-first policies of the 1950's and 60's, the awkward sibling of the Embarcadero Freeway and Doyle Drive. While plans to bring Doyle Drive down to earth as boulevards and grass-topped tunnels seem to finally be moving forward and the Embarcadero Freeway is mostly a specter from old Dirty Harry movies, no one imagines the Broadway Tunnel will ever be displaced. So volunteers have set about doing all they can to mitigate the concrete and exhaust fumes and to readjust the emphasis to human scale and a more pleasant pedestrian experience.

Preliminary plans include rows of trees and planter beds adjacent to the tunnel walls, attractive lighting and decorative paving. Well-known land-

scape architect and UC Berkeley instructor John Northmore Roberts is helping with design of the project. The group has enlisted the aid of DPW staffers with experience on the Embarcadero and Market Street renovations to help them through the bureaucratic labyrinth.

The group is working to raise private and grant funds to augment the money the City has promised towards the project. Those interested in donating or volunteering can find more information at www.rhn.org, or by calling Judy Junghans at 415-885-0293. The Russian Hill Neighbors site accepts PayPal contributions online, or your tax deductible donations can also be mailed to the Russian Hill Neighbors at 1819 Polk Street #221, San Francisco 94109 (make a notation that money is for the Greening the Broadway Tunnel Project).

Judy and Steve and their colleagues are ongoing proof that citizens can make a huge and positive difference in their communities. We look forward to taking a stroll on a green and beautiful Broadway promenade.



È TUTTO QUA! RISTORANTE—CAFFE

By Carol Peterson

270 Columbus Ave., (415) 989-1002

★★★★1/2

As we know, our own Alfa Nose gets around the neighborhood. Recently, at Broadway and Columbus, she witnessed the now late Enrico Banducci strolling across the street to the new È Tutto Qua where he greeted Enzo Pellico, its proprietor. I wish I had been there to witness these two great restraunteers embrace. Enrico had retired and Enzo has come back to give North Beach a very special Italian restaurant.

It is no secret that the corner of Columbus and Broadway has had some failures. No one wanted to take on the white elephant. No business has succeeded at this location since it was abandoned by the Bank of America.

After selling his neighborhood standby, The Steps of Rome, Enzo spent five years in Italy and came back to San Francisco for a vacation. Although he had no intention of opening another restaurant, his friends wanted him to see a wonderful space that had just become available. He walked into the former bank with its huge windows and light filled interior and fell in love with the architecture and location. He assembled his old staff, who are not only his friends but like a family to him and opened one of the best Italian restaurants North Beach has seen in quite some time.

The restaurant has been an overnight success due in a large part to the attitude that Enzo brings to this venture. Sweeping his arms open he says, "I love meeting the people who love my food." Then there's the welcoming staff that makes you feel like you are an old friend.

The first time we dined there, we went with another couple so we had quite a sampling of

the food. We started with an excellent scallop appetizer, a moist dish made with portabella mushrooms and truffle oil and cooked to perfection. I made good use of the inviting sauce, sopping it up with a piece of the first-rate home-made crusty bread.

However, by far my favorite appetizer is the Carpaccio di Polpo, which translates to finely sliced octopus. Diners need not be intimidated by this unusual dish with its out of this world flavor. This delicacy is served with olives, capers, onions and lemon olive oil dressing. Try it topped on a piece of the fresh bread.

The beautiful Uva, Rucola e Parmigiano salad is a must. The arugula is dressed with a delicious honey vinegar dressing and stacked with shaved imported parmesan cheese, with grapes on top. The dish is extremely tasty and just light enough to whet an appetite for the upcoming pasta. The pasta dish that stands out to me is Paccheri Pipieni, large tube pasta stuffed with spicy meat in a fresh tomato sauce made with truffle oil and mozzarella cheese.

Meat eaters will want to try the luscious lamb chop rubbed with Italian herbs and cooked to a juicy perfection. The dish comes with rosemary potatoes, sautéed baby broccoli buds and baby spinach. All of the produce is purchased at Union Street Produce and is extremely fresh.

As for desert, Enzo brought us a plate of tiramisu with four forks. It was moist and delicious. There is so much of this delicate desert sold, that they make it all day long. Our serving was only an hour old.

The restaurant is open from 10 am to midnight, which makes it a great spot for late night dining or a place to meet for breakfast. They serve breakfast all day long, with any-way-you-want-it three egg omelet,



continued on page 29

NORTH BEACH ICON, GALLETTI BROS. SHOE REPAIR CLOSSES

By Gerry Hurtado

Felix Santos, a professional cobbler, went to work at Galletti Bros. shoe service at 427 Columbus Avenue in 1980. Elmer Tosta was proprietor then. In 1996 Tosta sold the business to Santos, who has been providing the neighborhood the same high quality shoe repair ever since. But Felix Santos has closed his shop.

"The shoe repair business has changed," Santos said. "Years ago most of my customers came through the front door. That's no longer the case. Today 75 percent of my business is pick up and delivery. I pick up and drop off my repair orders on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So you can see that this shop is an expensive repair center for

work that I can do out of my garage for far less."

Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Santos set about to build a commercial clientele.

Accounts such as Wilkes Bashford, Salvatore Ferragamo and Bullock & Jones are now the mainstay of his business. But he is quick to say that he values his local customers many of whom are already taking advantage of his home delivery service.

"I'll miss my North Beach location and all the friends I have made through the years," he said. "As for my drop in customers, I hope they will call me."

Galletti Bros. business telephone remains (415) 627-8849. The store's e-mail is bell500@comcast.net.



A FOND FAREWELL TO A MASTER GARDENER AND DIPLOMAT

By June Fraps

Tom O'Connor, long-time gardener in Washington Square, has moved on to greener pastures—Golden Gate Park, to be precise. But he did not go without fanfare, and the heartfelt thanks of the neighborhood. The North Beach Chamber of commerce hosted a cocktail party at Amante for Tom and his wife, and the Friends of Washington Square honored him with a dinner at the Washington Square Bar and Grill.

Tom was assigned to Washington Square in 1998, after he served his 6-month probationary period with Rec and Park at Moscone playground. He's moving on to supervise department trainees in Golden Gate Park—closer to home, he says, but working in the fog. His able replacement is Carol Sionkowski, a landscape gardener with 11 years of experience.

A self-described "turf guy," Tom kept the square lush and green against daunting odds. The wear and tear of a succession of major events during the summer—the North Beach

Festival, the North Beach Jazz Festival, movie night, the mime troupe -- as well as the weekly volleyball matches provided constant assault. He worked hard to adapt the park to its users—defining paths with bark for bus stop users to make their way through the park, trimming hedges for visibility, planting—again and again!—spots to encourage users to use paths.

Tom the politician has dealt with all the park's interested parties fairly, firmly and with good humor. He worked around the Chinese exercise groups in the morning (and attended at least one of their Chinese banquets). He was a friend of the dogwalkers, if not the dogs, and the homeless who call the park home. He has worked tirelessly with the festival producers to set parameters for these major events that would prevent lasting damage to the park.

So, Tom moves on with enormous thanks for his unstinting care for our park, and our best wishes for his continued success caring for other parks in San Francisco.



TWO NEW THD ORAL HISTORIES: GENE WRIGHT AND DAVID MYRICK

By Rozell Overmire

It is only a short walk down to your local library for some lively reading about two extraordinary men who lived in North Beach during the fifties through 2000. One was a photographer with a studio on Grant Ave. and the other a historian and a Southern Pacific Railroad financial officer. They both lived on Filbert Street on the east side of Telegraph Hill.

Oral histories sometimes take a long time to complete, as with Gene Wright, the photographer. Will Shank, a local artist, interviewed Wright in his home in 2002. Wright was ill at the time and didn't sign a release form so the oral history could be published because he wanted to review the transcript first. All narrators are invited to read their transcripts before they are published by THD. Years later, after his death, his wife Liz Wright, helped to edit the transcript and donated some of Gene's stunning photos to be included. How fortunate we are to be able to see Gene's perspective through this oral history. The Semaphore recently featured an article on Gene's book, *San Francisco Love Affair, a Photographic Romance, 1949 to 2000*, published by his wife in 2006.

On the other hand, sometimes oral histories can be completed quickly. David Myrick, the author of *San Francisco's Telegraph Hill* and many books on western railroads, now lives in Santa Barbara where he originally grew up. He left San Francisco in 1981 but took time to update his Telegraph Hill book just a few years ago in 2001. He has kept in touch with the hill by receiving the Semaphore and has a complete set from issue #1. In fact, he was the editor of the first nine *Semaphore* issues when it was called the *Telegraph Hill Bulletin*. THD sells his wonderful book on our website, thd.org. A few years ago David

returned to San Francisco to help auction off old copies of the first edition at a THD fund raiser. With two days of interviews in May, 2007, David at 88 kept the conversation rolling. When asked to review the transcript he did so and sent it back promptly. He also donated over 250 photographs of views from Telegraph Hill to add to our THD Archives and to use in his and other oral histories.

Ask the librarian at the North Beach main desk for the THD Oral histories of these two men and sit down to a look back on what made living here special, through their eyes.

Rozell Overmire, Co-chair Oral History Committee and THD Archivist 8/28/2007

On page 21 of our summer issue Virginia Anderlini's name was misspelled. Our apologies.

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THD Salon Series

continued from page 18

number of invited artists, writers and art patrons. Up to three topics will be introduced, open discussion will ensue, one topic at a time. Our moderator will make sure that all are heard and that we don't venture too far off topic! For this first Salon, we will focus on art as it is experienced in North Beach by artists and non-artists, the low & high points, hopes and fears.

Among the guest artists, listed in no particular order, for Oct. 24th Salon are:

Jack Hirschman—poet

Kim Frohsin—painter

Thierry Rosset—printmaker

Martine Jardel—painter

Barbara Alexandra Szerlip—sculptor

Candace Loheed—painter

Nicolas Coley—painter

Kevin Brown—painter

Due to the event's format, the Salon can only accommodate 30 participants by RSVP only, and a donation of \$5 per person will be requested at the door. By the time you read this, this first event may have already happened. HOWEVER; no reason to miss out on our next one, scheduled for January 23rd. Keep your eyes and ears open for more information about the upcoming salon and,

other events organized by THD's Art, Culture and History Committee.

Meanwhile; we are also looking for volunteers and contributors: volunteers interested in Art, Culture & History Committee events, businesses wishing to offer your venue for future salons and art shows, or, local businesses looking for promotion opportunities through donation to our events, WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU ALL!! Please contact Termeh: historian@thd.org.

October's Salon is hosted by Fivepoints Arthouse, a new gallery/events space in North Beach. Jason Bryan of Fivepoints Arthouse has this to say about the venue's mission:

"Fivepoints Arthouse is an artist-run alternative space that seeks to challenge traditional notions of the creative space.

By exhibiting, significant, engaging and challenging works of art as well as conceptualizing and creating forward thinking design solutions, Fivepoints operates as a unique resource for creative impulses.

We promote visibility and accessibility by offering a true alternative model for interactions between the community and the creator."

The ArtHouse is located at 50 Bannam Street (off of Grant, between Union and Green). For more information about Fivepoints Arthouse please check the website: www.fivepointsarthouse.com.



sem.a.phore

DEFINITION: To convey information using visual signals, such as flags, lights and mechanical arms.

In the 19th century, Telegraph Hill was a lookout spot. A man stood at the top and watched for ships arriving through the Golden Gate. He used semaphore signals to spell out ships' names to the people below who were waiting for goods and mail. Neighbors who formed Telegraph Hill Dwellers in 1954 named their newsletter to salute this early use of the Hill.

Rhoda Curtis

continued from page 15

and Filbert that looked possible. Inquiring at the bar next door, we found out that the Italian landlord also owned a parking garage on the corner of Filbert and Grant. He turned out to be a taciturn man, chomping on a big cigar, who answered all our questions in monosyllables. He said the rent was twenty-five dollars a month, which sounded just right. Mr. Torelli acknowledged that there was a toilet and rooms in the back we could live in, but he didn't seem to care whether we rented it or not. He gave us a key, and we promised we'd let him know in an hour.

The store at 1541 Grant was an odd place. There was a partition between the front and the back, and there were small rooms behind thin walls, all separated from each other by doors. There was a small bathroom with a toilet, but no bathtub, and there was a room with two laundry tubs and an old gas stove. The back door, opening from the laundry tub room, led to a small yard, a weedy patch of grass.

Our imagination transformed the bare rooms. The front part of the store could be a combination workroom and showroom, and one of the back rooms would serve as a bedroom. The room with the stove would become our kitchen. We told Mr. Torelli we would take it, and gave him a month's rent. Full of confidence, we walked down Grant to Figoni's Hardware and Plumbing Shop. The Figoni who owned the hardware shop was one of the three famous Figonis in North Beach, important men in the neighborhood. One of the brothers owned and operated a night club, called "Finocchio's", on Broadway, featuring transvestite performers. The other Figoni owned the New Tivoli Restaurant on the block between Green and Union. Salvatore Figoni, at the hardware store, was friendly and talkative.

"Hi," he greeted us. Looking at Jim, who was still wearing his Navy uniform even though he was officially discharged, he said, "Hey, did you know your commander-in-chief just died?" The date was April 12, 1945.

"You mean Roosevelt?" Jim and I looked at each other.

"Yep. Harry Truman is now your president."

Jim automatically removed his hat. We stood there, not knowing what to say next. I felt a stab in my heart. Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been my president for twelve of my twenty-seven years; my father had accepted him as a worthy substitute for Norman Thomas, the perennial socialist candidate. Harry Truman, who was he? The war in Europe is over, but what about Japan?

The awkward silence grew. Then Figoni, in a fake cheerful voice, said, "Well, you didn't come in here to talk about Roosevelt, did you? What can I do for you?"

We told him that we had decided to rent 1541 Grant Avenue and make it into a shop to sell hand-made leather bags and belts like the one I was wearing. We told him we planned to live in the rear of the store, and we needed paint and pots and pans.

Figoni looked at us and laughed. Then he said, "Do you kids know what your place used to be?"

"No, what?" We said in unison.

He paused for effect. "A whorehouse! That's what! The whores have moved upstairs!" He laughed again, watching us to see how we would react.

"Oh!" I said. "That's why all the little rooms in the back of the partition are separated from each other by doors! Oh, well, if the whores don't bother us, we won't bother them." We were academics, after all. Whores were an intellectual construct. ♦

HELP THE 'HOOD *Shop Locally*

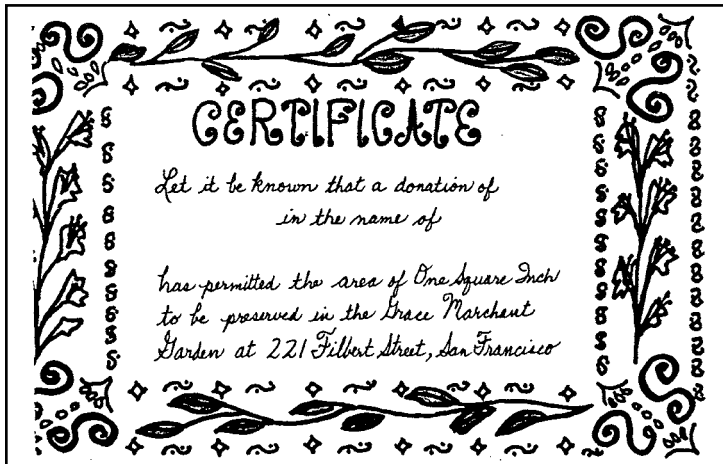
HELP NEEDED TO EXPAND THE GRACE MARCHANT GARDEN!

By Scott Parker

Project Manager, Trust for Public Lands

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Smith hosted a small party on September 21 to celebrate the neighborhood's recent acquisition of the property at 22 Alta Street as an addition to the Grace Marchant garden.

Many will recall the apartment building at that address that was undermined in a winter storm in 1992, and subsequently demolished. With the removal of the building, the garden enjoyed improved sunlight and space, and the vista from the Alta Street side allowed visitors the full sweep of the Filbert Steps and the east slope of Telegraph Hill. Despite plans and permits to redevelop the property as a private residence, many fought to see the parcel remain



1987—one inch for \$100.

as open space, and become a rare addition to the Grace Marchant Garden. The desire to see the parcel brought into protected ownership has survived the past fourteen years amidst the changing economies, politics and demands of San Francisco life.

In 2006, members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers contacted the San Francisco-based Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit land conservation organization committed to honoring the connection between land and people. The Trust for Public Land ("TPL") had previously worked to defend the Grace Marchant Garden in

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THE ALFA NOSE

by Kathleen Cannon

Jazzy Poetry.

July ended with a bang as two events ran back to back in North Beach. Wednesday, July 25th, in cafes, restaurants, clubs, and galleries all over the neighborhood, "Jazz on Grant" began the first (free) night of the North Beach Jazz Festival. B.J. Poppa played traditional notes at Caffè Trieste, next door to the Snake Plisskin Quintet at Steps of Rome, while a few doors away, the Live Worms Ensemble really rocked the jammed gallery.

The following evening, the International Poetry Festival kicked off in Jack Kerouac Alley. Organized by SF Poet Laureate Jack Hirschman and former Poet Laureate Lawrence Ferlinghetti, poets from all over the world offered readings throughout The City. The Beat Museum hosted a breakfast for 50 poetic participants, and the final reading at Live Worms Gallery overflowed with enthusiastic listeners—obviously a Populist event.

The Head Bandit

In August, Enrico Banducci, who died on October 9th, returned to the neighborhood. "Banducci means 'head bandit,'" Enrico divulged with a wink. Enrico still personifies North Beach. During the 1950's and early '60s, Enrico provided a platform for budding

talent at his hungry i. To successfully play "the i" was the route to fame for musicians and comedians, among them, the Kingston Trio, Jonathan Winters, Ronnie Schell, The Smothers Brothers and future mega stars like Barbra Streisand and Woody Allen.

Meeting with Enrico at Vesuvio was comedian Ronnie Schell. An ex-GI who entertained to avoid KP duty, Schell was a San Francisco State student when he auditioned at the hungry i in 1957. He is still incredibly funny, as evidenced from his conversation with Enrico at Vesuvio. The August 23rd interview was organized by Tony Gantner of the North Beach Merchants' Association. Also present were Ronnie's son, documentary producer Gregg Schell ("Chasing the Lotus"), long time Enrico's bartender Ward Dunham, and niece Chi Chi Banducci. The interview was part of an on-going video history by Gantner to capture the decade of the hungry i and its influence on North Beach through discussions with Enrico and former hungry i talent. The opening of "the i" was, Enrico said, his happiest moment: "The day I opened the hungry i, I threw away the key like Blackie Norton in 'San Francisco.'"

As the two men talked, recalling folk acts like Glen Yarbrough, Harry Bellefonte, Miriam Makeba,



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THE ALFA NOSE

and Odetta and comedians like Allen Sherman, Joan Rivers, Tom Lehrer, Jerry Stiller, Phyllis Diller and the tragic Lenny Bruce, memories shone like the rhinestones on Enrico's beret.

Ronnie Schell got his break in 1957, when headliner Jonathan Winters (The Jolly Buccaneer) made a midnight climb up the mast of the Balclutha on Pier 54. Enrico called to say Mr. Winters was "sick." Ronnie went on to open for The Kingston Trio for over two years and, afterwards for Carol Burnett in Vegas. He starred in his own sitcom "Good Morning World," and played numerous other roles. He is still playing Harvey's at Lake Tahoe.

Dinner was at Enrico's where new owner Christina Deeb dropped by to greet everyone. Discussion included the August 16th birthday party for Spec, at Specs, attended by "commies and radicals, and leftovers from Vesuvio" all of whom rallied to a good time.

After Enrico's, Tony, Ward and I stopped at the The Beat Museum to view Dick Boyd's new powerpoint presentation of his book, *Broadway: The Golden Years*. According to Dick, along Broadway, Andrew Jagger's is sorely missed. The Condor, now at the the ex-Jagger site, is being billed as the 'Original Striptease A Go Go Club'. But not forever, if Dick Boyd's vision to restrict girlie joints to east of Montgomery Street ever comes to fruition. A third printing of Dick's book, is coming out in time for Christmas.

A Gloriously Blue Day.

Music from the hot and cool 35th SF Blues Festival drifted sweetly through Ft. Mason Sunday



Ronnie Schell with Enrico Banducci.

September 30th. Oakland supplied 'storefront blues' talent from the former Ely's Mile High club, like the sweet sounds of Sugar Pie D'Santo, Jimmy McCrackin and Joe Lewis Walker (a slide guitar master). Brit James Hunter's Band played traditional R&B with baritone and tenor saxes, and one cool Caribbean beat. The final segment offered the Mississippi Blues of John Hammond, formerly with Bob Dylan and The Band (and the only musician to ever have Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix in his band at the same time). His renditions of Robert Johnson songs lent a smooth ending to a gloriously Blue day. John Hammond, who has just released his 29th album "Push Comes to Shove," is also a longstanding friend of Marin local Tom Waits (whose lyrics from the "Foreign Affairs" album about Jack Kerouac and The Beats were recently recited at The Beat Museum's open mike poetry reading.)

Mal Sharpe, back from vacation in Italy, is again stompin' at the Savoy-Tivoli with The Big Money

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THE ALFA NOSE

in Jazz Band, which makes Saturday afternoons on Grant Avenue more melodic.

Mars is Getting Closer...

And fabulous when viewed from Coit Tower. After the full Harvest Moon of September, expect the full Hunter's Moon of October (and unusually high tides). The Frosty Moon of November is next, and then the Yule Moon of December. Did you know that every monthly moon has a name? So snuggle in and ignore the effect of the Red Planet. Stay warm... but, hey it's Telegraph Hill, so always keep your cool. ✕

On October 16th Hill Dweller Rosalie Taggi celebrated her 100th birthday.

Congratulations from the Telegraph Hill Dwellers



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Remembering The Place *continued from page 11*

Jack Lind some of what was special about The Place: “When Jack Kerouac wrote *On the Road* people started hitchhiking to San Francisco from all over the country, even from foreign countries, and their first stop was The Place. They walked in with the luggage and I usually let them park their stuff a few days until they got squared away. What are you going to do?”

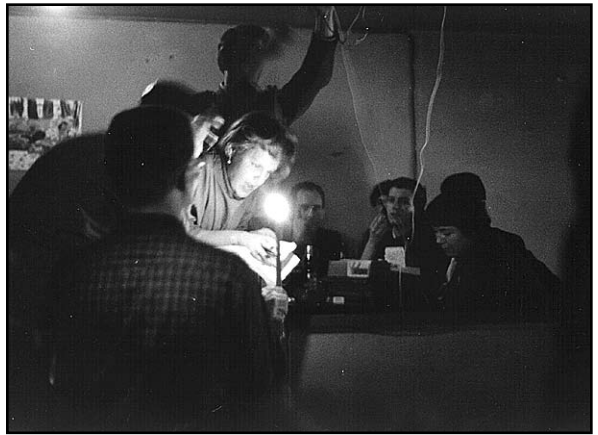
“I had everything at the Place,” said Krerorian. The walls displayed the work of later well-known artists like Jay De Feo, Wally Hendrick and Robert La Vigne.

Then there were the poetry readings. “We had all the famous poets of the time. Ginsberg read his poetry in The Place. In fact, he tested out *Howl* in my place before it was published. Kerouac was there all the time. And (Richard) Brautigan, was only 19 when he started coming in.”

And the music. “A lot of good musicians used to come in and play. I had a piano and guys like Paul Desmond and Brew Moore would come by. It wasn’t a regular jazz place, but people would always come in and play.”

But the most celebrated aspect of the culture around The Place was probably Blabbermouth Night, where, once a week, while the rest of the nation was watching *Guns n’ Roses*, the locals—one at a time—would mount the loft—the Blabberbox—and engage in off-the-cuff, spontaneous talk about anything they liked.

“A lot of it was politics,” said Krerorian. “When Nixon was vice president he was the subject of a lot of speeches. Some of these speakers were really far out. The best of them would get a bottle of free champagne. After the main speech, everybody could



Blabbermouth Night at The Place, c. 1958

PHOTO C. J. SNYDER, COURTESY SHAPING SAN FRANCISCO

ask questions and there would be rebuttals; the whole bar got involved. Sometimes it was so crowded that nobody could move, and I couldn’t serve drinks—and I was in business, ya know.”

At one Blabbermouth Night, recorded April 15, 1957, Beat celebrity “Big Daddy” Eric Nord, maverick millionaire Jeremy Ets-Hokin, Chronicle art critic Thomas Albright and comedian Irwin Cory were present, as well as other bohemian luminaries. Among those in the Blabberbox was a fellow known as Barney Google, who had a plan to run a six-inch pipe up Coit Tower that would spew a 1,000 foot beer geyser every hour on the hour. “A beer company might sponsor it,” he said. Google also advocated establishing a boundary from Montgomery up Columbus Avenue (with a detour to the west around Vesuvio and City Lights). Those crossing the boundary checkpoint would need to show a passport and pay fees of up to \$100 for admission. “This will save North Beach for the Bohemians,” Google claimed.

continued on page 11

Restaurant Review: È Tutto Qua *continued from page 19*

pan roasted potatoes and bread.

Some old timers are coming back to the neighborhood, with better and more innovative ideas about food. As the Chronicle’s Michael Bauer says, “There is only one place in San Francisco that Issue #181 • Fall 2007

reminds me of New York and that is North Beach.” It is people like Enzo Pellico who reinforce how lucky we are to live here and remind us that we rarely need to go out of our neighborhood for some of the best food in San Francisco.

Grace Marchant Garden *continued from page 25*

1987, mounting an unusual "Square Inch" campaign, wherein donors of \$10.00 or more received a certificate attesting to the protection of one square inch of the garden. Nearly overwhelmed by the public's response, TPL was able to purchase a parcel near Napier Lane threatened with an oversized residential development proposal. The TPL deed restricted the property and, in doing so, assured the parcel would remain a part of the garden together with the historic cottage that would otherwise have been demolished.

Those in attendance at the event hosted by the Smiths heard a tale involving costly appraisals, land-slides, parrots, and funding reversals, that concluded with the purchase by TPL of the parcel of land that is 22 Alta. In June of 2007, TPL donated the property to the Northeast San Francisco Conservancy. But much work remains to be done.

At the Smith's event, Nancy Shanahan, President

of the NESFC, explained that funding is needed to retain planning services, remove the old building foundation, purchase insurance, and provide topsoil and plants for the site. Larry Habegger, of Friends of the Garden, remarked that grants such as the one from TPL are the key element to the long-term survival and growth of an urban oasis such as the Grace Marchant Garden.

Your help is needed to assure the 22 Alta property becomes a full and valued addition to the Grace Marchant garden, that the NESFC is adequately funded for stewardship of the site, and that TPL recovers its costs and is able to continue working on the hill. **Your tax-deductible contribution may be made to:**

The Trust for Public Land / 22 Alta Campaign
116 New Montgomery Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA. 94105, ATTN: Jessica Partch



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Show off your neighborhood pride with the new Telegraph Hill Dwellers t-shirt. The 100% cotton black t-shirt features NORTH BEACH on the chest, and the THD logo on the right sleeve. Also available as a 100% cotton fleece long-sleeved hooded pullover sweatshirt for those chilly San Francisco summer nights. Quantities are limited, so reserve yours today



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Remembering The Place *continued from page 29*

The winner of the bottle of champagne at this particular Blabbermouth evening was one Big Cyn. Big Cyn told the audience she was having a hard time on Telegraph Hill because as “a German, a secretary and a virgin” she was not readily accepted. However, on receiving her prize Big Cyn confessed: “The truth is I’m French, an artist and very easy.”

The Place could get noisy and, as the story goes, the Italian-Americans, who were still in the neighborhood, were up in arms. They didn’t want the hooting and hollering associated with the scene. So the Beats developed an alternative. They would snap their fingers as a way of paying respect to the poets and speakers, while honoring the wishes of the neighbors. This remedy must not, however, have entirely solved the problem: The poets were thrown out of The Place in 1959 because they were making too much noise.

In the early 1960s the location was taken over by students from the San Francisco Art Institute, who set up a soup kitchen and showed movies. Later, it



Soapbox at The Place, c. 1959

PHOTO C. J. SNYDER, COURTESY SHAPING SAN FRANCISCO

was occupied by the shop of jeweler S Paul Gee. In 1984, graphic designer Bruce Yeleska moved into the site, joining illustrator John Mattos who had moved there two years earlier. Mattos still has an apartment at this location.

The current owner of the building has acquired Ellis Act status for the premises. But some are proposing 1546 Grant as a historic landmark. A lot of our neighborhood’s cultural history has been played out within its walls. ✂

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE PLACE

by Jane Juska

I was fascinated by the 1950s renegades, the girls who went to Greenwich Village in New York or North Beach in San Francisco and became beatniks, which meant at least to me, that they had a lot of sex. I tried to become a beatnik. I grew my hair long, and hung out in bars. But I never had sex. I never even got asked to have sex. The closest I got was one night at a bar called The Place on Grant Avenue in North Beach. The Place was small, dark, and probably dirty, though there was never enough light to find out for sure. The one waitress in The Place—Sheila was her name—appeared magically out of the darkness, holding pitchers and a tray handed to her by some sorcerer in the alley out back. No bartender was ever seen. Every Monday night was Blabbermouth Night: Anyone who wanted to could take the grungy little stage and harangue or sing or recite their poems or do magic tricks, whatever they felt like, the only requirement being a sincere attempt at being outrageous. ... One night Dirty-Talking Charles, as he was known to North Beach, strode up—“weaved” is more accurate—to the stage, turned to the audience, and began to chant “Sex is the answer, sex is the answer.” On he went, never varying, never pausing, never even ending, it seemed to me. Finally, many beers within me, I called out, “So what is the question?” Dirty-Talking Charles, without missing a beat said, “Will You?” In 1956 that was a showstopper. That’s as close as I ever got to talking about sex or having some for far too many years to follow. I also failed to become a beatnik; I could never figure out what to wear on my feet, and the long braid I wore down my back gave me headaches.

From: *Unaccompanied Women: Late life Adventures in Love, Sex and Real Estate*

by Jane Juska, Random House: 2007. Reprinted with Permission

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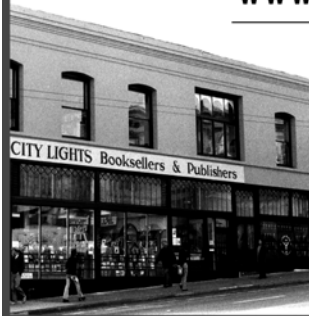
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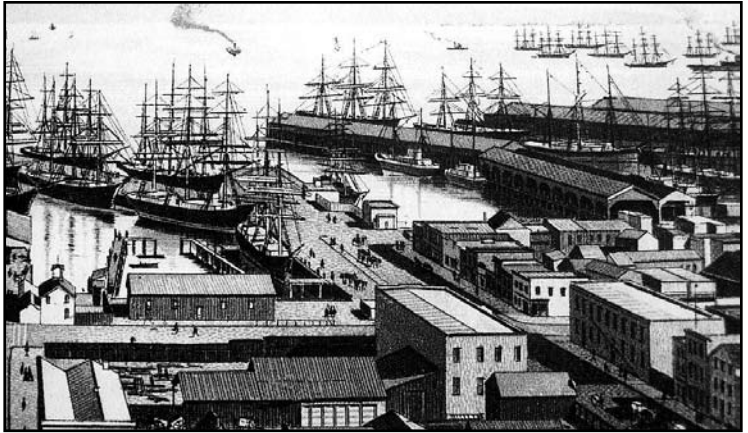
AT THE WATERFRONT —THE DANIEL GIBB WAREHOUSES—

By Catherine Accardi

The history of the beach that became North Beach has many facets. However, a good place to start this series of articles that will take a close look at our waterfront would be at the Daniel Gibb Warehouses. These are two of San Francisco's first warehouses, and two of the handful of structures surviving from California's gold rush and the 1906 earthquake.

Clarke's Point, between Battery and Front Streets, marks the original shoreline along the base of Telegraph Hill. The Point was named after early pioneer William Squire Clark. He built the first San Francisco wharf, called the Broadway wharf, extending Broadway 150 feet into the bay. This is a noteworthy fact because it is here that the waterfront and port of San Francisco had its beginnings. The Broadway wharf was completed in September 1847, just a few months before the beginning of California's gold rush. This wharf allowed sailing ships to directly unload cargo onto the shore. Prior to 1847, goods had to be brought ashore by lighterage.

And here, at Clark's Point, in 1855, the two



LITHOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MARITIME NHP

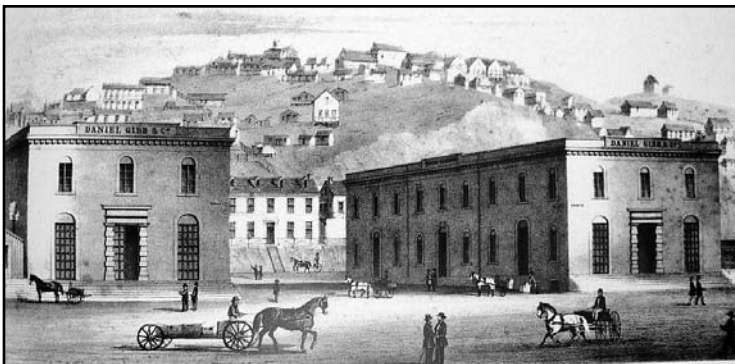
Daniel Gibb warehouses were constructed, on land-fill, at Vallejo and Front Streets. The shoreline of San Francisco was across the street.

Built by Daniel Gibb, a successful merchant, the two warehouses served their purpose for over 100 years. They stored wine, seeds and beans.

The lithograph above is of the two Gibb warehouses across from each other at Vallejo Street. The 1906 earthquake damaged the upper walls. Historians suggested the cast iron door on Front Street may be original. The exposed foundation stones are thought to be quarried from Telegraph Hill, and this is thought to be the first quarrying of The Hill.

The 1860 lithograph on the left is another view of the two Gibb warehouses on both sides of Vallejo Street. Behind is an early view of what is now Telegraph Hill.

In the 1870's, Daniel Gibb sold the properties to a Mr. Strauch who operated them until the 1890's. Both buildings continued to serve as warehouses for many decades. In the early 1940's, the Trinidad Bean and Elevator Company



LITHOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE MARITIME NHP

occupied the 101 Vallejo Street (formerly 855 Front Street) warehouse until the 1960's when they moved to a location in the Central Valley. The Pelican Paper Company occupied the twin warehouse at 901 Front Street (now 915 Front Street).

During the 1960's, many buildings on the north waterfront were abandoned. However, over the next several decades, the north waterfront's warehouse district enjoyed a rebirth.

It was during this north waterfront renaissance that The Ron Kaufman Companies renovated and modernizing the interior of 101 Vallejo.

As you can see in the 2007 photographs on this page, the buildings now house modern offices.

The photograph on the right is 855 Front Street/101 Vallejo Street, currently occupied by MBV Law Offices. The photograph below is 915 Front Street, currently occupied by Vx Capital Partners.

In 1977, the city of San Francisco designated both of these warehouses as landmarks. Also in 1977, 101 Vallejo was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places, a designation reserved for structures of national significance.



855 Front Street PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE ACCARDI

Look for more articles "At the Waterfront" in future issues of *The Semaphore*.

As it states in Robert Courland's book, *The Old North Waterfront*: "Telegraph Hill is the North Waterfront and the North Waterfront is Telegraph Hill"

Sources:

- Courland, Robert - *The Old North Waterfront*
- Richards, Rand - *Historic Walks in San Francisco*
- **San Francisco City Planning Code Article 10:**
Preservation of Historical, Architectural and Aesthetic

Landmarks

Photographs: San Francisco Heritage and Catherine Accardi

Lithographs: Courtesy of the Maritime National Historic Park.



915 Front Street PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE ACCARDI

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FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR PESKIN



Friends and Neighbors—It seems like every few months it's election season in this town. And while for many that means cleaning out more than the usual amount of fliers in the mailbox, **Proposition A** on this November's ballot presents a real opportunity to reform and improve our city's public transportation system, and reduce San Francisco's greenhouse gas emissions.

The idea behind Proposition A is simple: reducing our city's carbon footprint starts by making public transportation a viable alternative to private vehicle trips. In North Beach, that's not a new idea—our corner of the city is home to the highest percentage of people that walk to work. Because we live in one of the highest-density neighborhoods west of the Mississippi, the northeast corner has a rich public transit infrastructure. But as anyone who relies on our municipal transit system knows, Muni has vast room for improvement.

There is no question about it—our transit system is in dire need of help. It shouldn't be this way. Across the country, dense urban areas are experiencing a transit renaissance—ridership is up and service is expanding to meet the new demand. Here in San Francisco, just the opposite is happening. Fewer people are riding Muni, and those that do are unhappy with the level of service.

Our bus and rail systems have been chronically under-funded for decades. Recurring shortfalls hurt on-time performance and route availability. Moreover, one-time infrastructure investment costs are stacking up quickly. In places, Muni's central control facility is held together with duct tape. Literally. The city deserves better.

Proposition A makes changes in the Municipal Transit Agency's funding structure that will help to close the budget deficit without raising taxes, and will give the MTA tools for addressing long-overdue capital problems. The annual increased revenue would come by allowing the Agency, which oversees Muni and the Department of Parking and Traffic, to keep more of the revenue generated by city owned garages, parking meters, and parking citations. In addition, Prop A will allow the MTA to issue revenue bonds to finance capital projects like the purchase of cleaner hybrid-buses and rebuilding the central control facility.

Funding is only part of the challenge. Employee accountability is also a critical component. That's why Proposition A would expand pay-for-performance and increase the number of managers who serve at-will to the MTA Chief.

Proposition A will also require the MTA to help move San Francisco towards the emissions reduction



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continued on p. 37

From the Desk of Supervisor PESKIN

goals of the Kyoto Protocol. Close to 50% of carbon emissions produced in urban environments in the United States come from vehicle trips. As the agency that regulates all transportation on city streets, the MTA should be held accountable for moving us as a city towards greater sustainability by improving service and reducing reliance on private vehicle travel.

Nothing will fix Muni overnight, but Proposition A is a big step in the right direction. By providing increased funding for Muni without raising taxes, improving accountability for the Municipal Transportation Agency's management, and focusing San Francisco on reducing our greenhouse gas output, I know prop A will make a real difference.

And while you're in the voting booth—hopefully pulling the lever for Prop A—beware of **Proposition H**. Brought to the ballot without a single public hearing, this measure's sixty-one pages of fine print are

full of loopholes that benefit downtown developers and would be a big set back for our neighborhoods. This initiative ordinance put on by paid signature gatherers funded by GAP magnate Don Fisher, would triple the amount of parking allowed for new downtown high-rise condos and office towers. It would lead to even more congestion in our relatively compact downtown core.

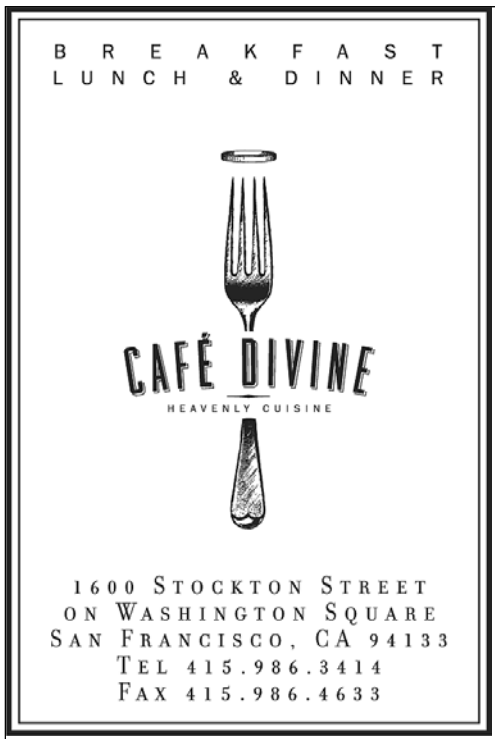
Prop H provides unlimited parking for what it calls "low emission vehicles." The catch? "Low-emission," as defined in the measure includes Hummers, Cadillac Escalades, Ford Expeditions and Range Rovers—none of which get even 20 miles per gallon.

The San Francisco Planning Department has estimated that Measure H will put 20,000 new vehicles on San Francisco streets. That means more traffic, more air pollution, and the problems associated with both—increased hazards for pedestrians, child asthma, and global warming.

Proposition H is the most cynical kind of ballot box planning effort: a downtown-funded attack on sensible city planning regulations masquerading as a coalition of neighborhood voices. I hope you will join me, Mayor Newsom and our Planning Director Dean Macris in voting no on Proposition H.

Finally, a piece of long awaited news: After years of court battles the City's Recreation and Parks Department is in possession of the triangle shaped property adjacent to Joe DiMaggio Park at 701 Lombard Street. It is very rare to find new opportunities for open space in dense corners of this city, and I am very pleased that we can finally move forward in turning this parking lot across from the North Beach Playground into an open space that will be of benefit to all of us. Thanks to all of you who worked so hard to get us to this point.

See you around the neighborhood and as always don't hesitate to call (554-7450) or contact me by email (Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org).



NEIGHBORHOOD SUSTAINABILITY

by *Bernie Meyerson, Chair*

At our second meeting, on September 26, we enjoyed a presentation by and discussion with Melissa Caprio of the SF Department of the Environment (DOE) concerning ways THD could work with the DOE in addressing the climate challenge. Some easy energy savers for members to implement at home or at work include:

1. Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
2. Wash full loads of dishes and air dry.
3. Put home electronics on power strips and turn off when not in use.
4. Wash full loads of clothes and air dry.
5. Purchase appliances with ENERGY STAR label.
6. Turn off lights when leaving a room.
7. Moderate your thermostat by a few degrees up or down for cooling and heating.

Here are some other suggestions:

You can get an assessment of your residence for

solar power potential by going to sf.solarmap.org and plug in your address.

If you are having difficulty expanding recycling at home let us know, and we'll try to help.

We need to have greater reliance on local food sources. We are developing a farmers market data base and will be investigating ways of expanding availability of local, reasonably-priced products.

We'll be looking at ways to get you out of your car more often. Any ideas?

Is there room for more trees on your sidewalk? We'll work with the THD Parks and Trees Committee to help.

Our committee is just getting started and welcomes anyone who wants to join us. THD can be a leader and a model for our community. Contact me via the email address below to find out about our next meeting: ber8832@aol.com.



As a Hill resident and Homeowner since 1975, I would like to Thank all Past and Present Officers and Directors and working Associates of Telegraph Hill Dwellers for their hard work and dedication in Preserving Our Beautiful Hill.

Peter Dwares

331 Filbert Street

415-434-1717



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THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

You can make a difference! Join one of THD's committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

STANDING COMMITTEES

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION. Promotes efforts to ease congestion, optimize white zones, upgrade public transportation. Works with Department of Parking and Traffic.

PLANNING AND ZONING. Nancy Shanahan, 986-7094, Mary Lipian, 391-5652. Monitors and reviews proposed development projects for consistency with applicable City ordinances. Works with Planning Department staff and represents THD before the Landmarks Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator and other regulating bodies to protect historic resources and maintain neighborhood character. Assists members to learn more about and participate in planning and zoning issues.

SEMAPHORE. Editor, Art Peterson 956-7817; artpeterson@writingproject.org. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

PROGRAM. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions.

BUDGET. Greg Chiampou, gchiampou@sbcglobal.net. As prescribed in bylaws for Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP. Pat Lusse, membership@thd.org. As prescribed in Bylaws for Financial Secretary.

ARCHIVIST: Rozell Overmire, rozell@ureach.com

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

PARKS AND TREES. Information and projects concerning local parks, green spaces and street trees.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. Audrey Tomaselli, 391-1792; tmsli@sonic.net. Rozell Overmire, 989-3945, rozell@ureach.com. Taped interviews provide historical documentation of living and working in the neighborhood.

THD WEB SITE. Webmaster, Al Fontes, 433-6515; webmaster@thd.org. Shared information about meetings, local concerns and events.

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerrycrowley@aol.com. City-wide organization interacts with other neighborhoods to discuss common problems.

NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerry-crowley@aol.com. Tel-Hi-sponsored group of residents, merchants and government agencies working together to address neighborhood issues.

N.E.R.T. Jack Oswald. jack@oswald.com. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

Whether you want to catch up on THD's Oral Histories, see what the THD is up to, or submit old photos of the Hill, www.thd.org is the place to go. Use the Web site to discover or email information about upcoming meetings in the neighborhood and at City agencies, and ideas and concerns you want the rest of us to know about between *Semaphores*.

THD CALENDAR

SCHEDULES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLANNING & ZONING: First Thursdays. Call for time and location, 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

Look to the THD website for information on THD events.

Log on to
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For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

THD Welcomes New Members Fall 2007: Bud & Caren Zisson, Catherine Grandi, Leigh Kienker, Peggy Huff, Tracy Talley, Joe Del Valle, Antoinette Aliotti, Joanne Clum, Peggy Coster, Joyce DeBello, Galena Geler, Art Gomes, Xiao Ling Huang, Michael Ikaro, Patricia Luddington, Francisco Luke Park, John Raymond, Sheng Yun Shih, So Tang, Tung Lan Wang, Jay Herndon, Ruth & Steven Keys, Woodrow Chan, Alfred Freierick, Ita & Roman Kodlyar, Clement Ng, Minna & Jakob Ronin, Jason Rork, Victor Santis, Hannah Solovey, Ralph Sterner, Michael Tiffany, Jeannie Young, Roma Bye, Glee Sheehan

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

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